

iO2 Trend of Revolution towards the Past.

was revolutionary enough. But the revolution, as far as the purely agrarian programmes were concerned, was not the outcome of new ideas. Some of its leaders, like Hipler and Weigant, rose to the more modern view of a free State. Some even contemplated a complete overthrow of the existing political as well as social institutions. The reaction against feudalism must, too, have led to political and social progress. In general, however, the trend of the revolution was towards the past rather than the future. It sought to re-establish primitive rights and primitive Christianity, and in this respect it did not go beyond the Middle Ages. In this it resembles, too, the English agrarian revolution of the fourteenth century, though it was less fortunate in its ultimate results. While the English villein became practically a free man in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the German Bauer remained a serf till the French Revolution.

The suppression of the revolution had an important effect on the German Reformation. The hope that religious reform would become the instrument of social reform was blasted. The preachers who had worked for a reformation of society, as well as of the Church, were crushed in the general crash ; and in those lands where Catholic princes held sway, the repression of the rebellion sealed at the same time the fate of the religious reformation itself. In a large part of the south Roman Catholicism triumphed with the victory of the princes and lords; and thus Luther, in championing so fiercely the cause of class against mass, was in reality working into the hands of his enemies. In the other half of Germany his cause indeed triumphed, but it triumphed at the cost of thirling it to princely and aristocratic interests. Lutheranism ceased to be a popular creed. The populace hated him and his henchmen, Melancthon and Spalatin, as panderers to tyrants. " We see," confessed Melancthon, " how much the mob hates us." And Luther certainly did his best, by his dogged insistence on the gospel of force, to deserve the hatred of the people. He continued to glory in his wild philippic against them. " It was I, Martin Luther, who slew all the peasants during the insurrection, for I commanded them to be slaughtered; all their blood is on my head. But I throw the responsibility on our Lord God, who instructed me to give this order." " Like